THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Consistent with the liberalisation policy of the Government major steps have been taken in the coal industry :

(i) to permit private sector participation in coal mining operations for the purpose of captive consumption for powers generation and other end uses to be notified as well as for seting up of washeries. This will augment the availability of coal for the core sector of the economy in the coming years. A Bill in this regard to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 was introduced in the Parliament and is awaiting enactment. This would not affect the existing manpower of Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries.

(ii) With a view to further improve availability of coal to the small consumers in different parts of tthe country, Coal India Ltd. have launched a new scheme for developing wholesale trade in coal. Under this scheme, the subsidiary companies of CIL will appoint wholesale dealers on the basis of application through open advertisement. Each dealer shall have to lift at least 3,000 tonnes of coal per month. Dealers will have the freedom to sell coal and fix prices for such sale.

Coal India had alsc introduced schemes under which any one could purchase upto 1000 tonnes of coal from certain collieries and Stockyards.

These measures would help in liquidation of accumulated pithead stocks and accrual of cash to Coal Companies.

(b) According to information furnished by Coal India Limited, the number of identified surplus manpower in labour cadre in their coal companies as on 1st November, 1992 was 14,920. There is no surplus in executive cadre.

(c) Coal India and its subsidiary companies have a system of preparation of annual manpower budget for all establishments right from the collieries/projects to areas and company headquarters. The system facilitates designationwise, categorywise and skillwise enumeration of manpower and its proper deployment according to the requirement of different units/establishment. Rationalisation of Manpower both horizontally and vertically from surplus areas to deficit areas is being undertaken on a continuing basis after imparting specified training/retraining in identified skills, wherever necessary.

Tobacco Exports to China

*198. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there are claims and counter claims in regard to our tobacco exports to China;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what steps have been taken to settle these; and

(d) what are the reasons for the delay ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) As per information available with the Tobacco Board, the Chinese importers raised claims against Indian exporters of tobacco in 9 cases during 1982-83 and in 4 cases during 1986-87. All these claims were settled between the importers and exporters amicably except in one case relating to M/s. Gogineni Tobaccos. In that case, though the importer and exporter reportedly agreed for the settlement of the claim by supply of 610 tonnes of tobacco initially towards full settlement, later the issue became a dispute as the importer was reported to have gone back on the agreement and demanded cash payment instead of supply of tobacco. As the exporter was not agreeable to this, the issue is in stalemate.

Policy Framework for Counter Trade

*199. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :